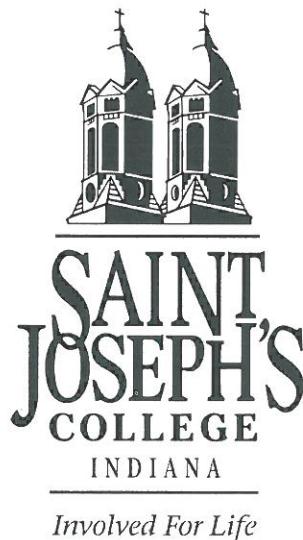


Measure



2002-03 Edition

The Literary Magazine of Saint Joseph's College



Measure
2002-03 Edition

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Damned to be Guinevere

Liz Henning

I know I ought to be content
With the love that I am given
But to me this cruel heartless world
Seems hardly fit to live in.

After years of hapless struggles
I met one whose love was plain
His honesty soon won my heart
And reconciled my pain.

His simple heart he gave to me
And soon his love he voiced.
In his honest vow, his faithful heart
My wounded soul rejoiced.

He nursed my heart soon back to health
He was not hesitant to start.
Now to him I feel I owe my life
So I promised him my heart.

I lived and loved in great content
I was convinced my love was true.
Then suddenly, one summer's eve
I happened to meet you.

Engaging, charming, well mannered, outgoing
You took my breath away.
My loyalties were tested then,
But with my love I vowed to stay.

Your rich persona glittered and gleamed
And like a moth to flame
I sought you out, and in my mind
I wanted you to claim.

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I knew I'd never hear your heart
I knew I'd never see
That charming, debonair half smile
Cast alone for me.

I knew soon that I'd fallen for you
And now admit with trepidation
That you have somehow come to be
My accidental inspiration.

I took for granted how close you were
I thought you'd always be so near
But now as spring begins to break
The truth is painfully clear.

Another girl—a worthier maid
Had laid a claim to you.
And you return her love and like
With a heart that's honest and true.

And so my lot is sealed and set
I shall remain with my love here.
For it seem through some cruel twist of fate
I am damned to be Guinevere.

I'll remain by one who loves me true
Within the fair prison of Camelot
A dream, that for me, came to an end,
When I lost my true love, Lancelot.

A declaration of my love
Is hardly worth the making.
But I know now that I love you
For within, my heart is breaking.

Thursday

Nicholas T.Schaefer

Running

What a punishment, I cannot imagine
the sin that caused God to chastise us so.

But we must run.
from...

class to class.

meeting to meeting.

lecture to lecture.

party to party.

beer to beer.

shot to shot.

woman to woman.

I feel hot and cold,
disgustingly thick and dangerously thin,
contemptuously smart and immensely stupid.

as if some giant insect
is eating away at me,
from the inside
out

The Near Conception of Flame

Annie Domasica

She pushes the wire-rimmed glasses onto her plain face
as if they are her superhero cape,
transforming her from ordinary to profound.

Since she had been small, she had always mothered,
nurturing her friends with a steady hand
and a heart that understood far beyond her years.

Hardly noticing her spark, the near conception of her own flame,
they stream into her room one by one
and sit upon her couch and bend her ear.

Speaking boldly of God and Sex, timidly of thoughts and ideas,
they examine nightmares of which they know nothing,
and dreams they have only just begun to realize.

She breathes life into dreams and extinguishes fears.
She feeds hesitant love and fuels notions of flight.
She sets them free and gives them wings...

All the while forgetting, she too has the right to fly.

Pieces

Natalie Lapacek

I pick up the pieces of my life
In my messy room.

Everything is everywhere,
or in a place
Only where I can find them.

Yet I can't find them.

Where is that?
I just had it,
where did it go?

Digging is the key.

Buried pieces
are dark and misshapen

Like fallen tears
during the
dismal night.

and look to the pieces that go
together.

Those pieces fit,
Bright like
Smiles and laughter
during a
favorite song.
These latch together, yet

it is not
complete.

thrown
aside

These do not fit
in the puzzle.

I put them aside.

Could it be

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the lurid goes with
the vivid?
The tears and the
night
with the song and
the smile?

I begin to build
the puzzle.

I find more pieces,
Big, gorgeous bits

That remind me of
days as a child
when the world was
wondrous.

These
make it complete.

But wait

There are pieces
in the middle,

Missing.

I gaze at my
unfinished work.

Pieces
lie astray,

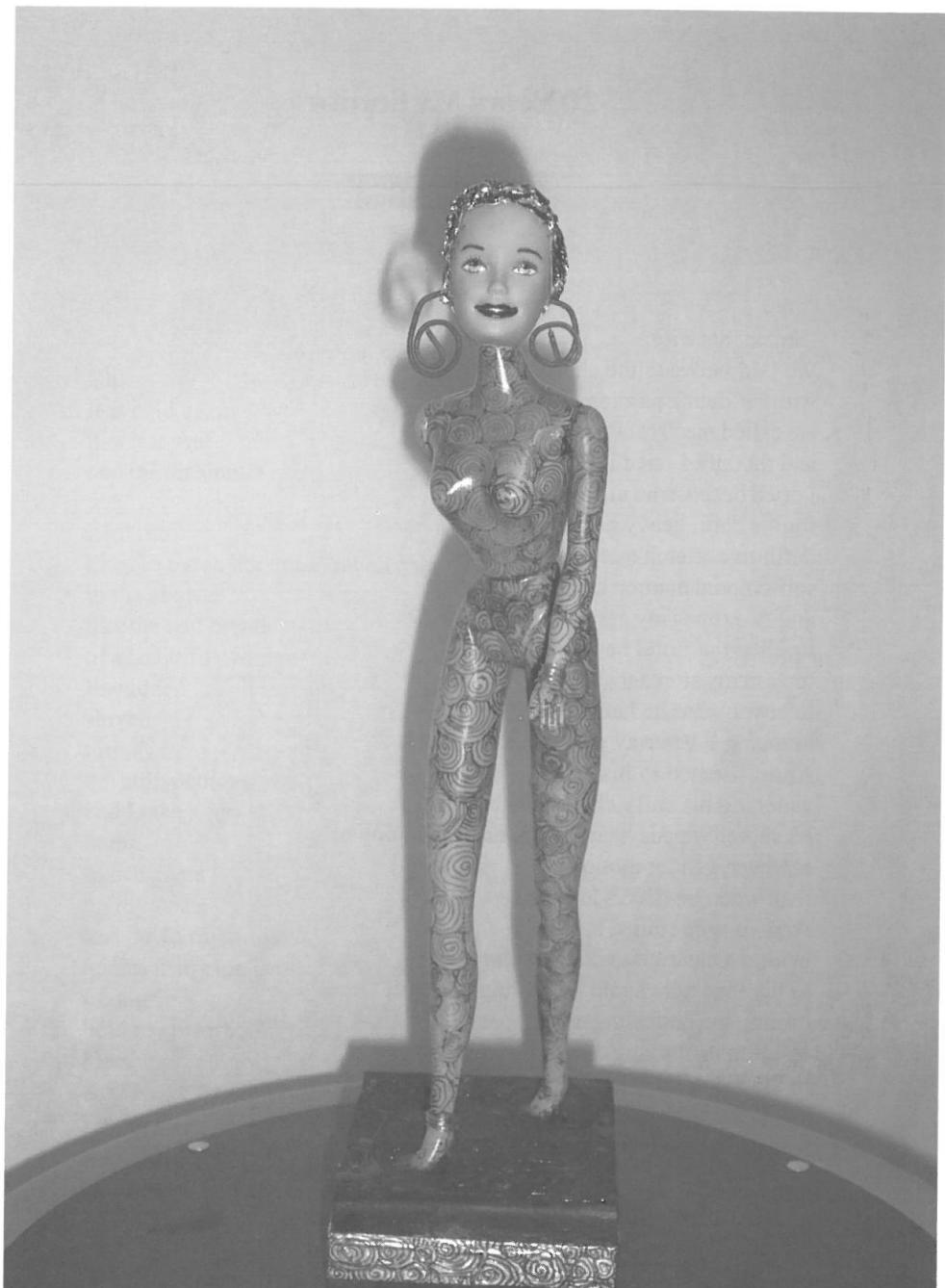
leaving
holes in the image

the picture has gaps,

it's not easy
to make it out,
to see the whole thing
in full view,

but what is it?

Is that...
me?



Barbie on a Walk in the Park
Sarah Clark

20 Years My Senior

Melissa Genova

I am not his wife.
We laid between the sheets tousled
with infidelity, passion, and sperm.
He called me “Nora” out of habit,
and thought I cried in rapture.
I cried because he mistook me
for his dark, heavy broad –
definitive stretch marks on her arms,
self-colored maroon hair,
and two times my age.
I pulled the floral bedsheets
toward my stomach,
to cover what he had already seen,
knowing I was way past modesty.
And I listened to his snorts,
watching his curly chest hairs rise as
he snored – pecs heaving up, down, up, down,
a slower, gentler motion
than when he makes love.
And his wife smiled at me
behind a clear glass plate on the wall
as her man stirs again – fondling my hips,
turning me in, feeling up,
slipping in, moving down,
bedsheets falling to the ground
while the photo stares, grinning, knowing.
Like a fucking fly on the wall.

Winter

Annie Domasica

Oh.
It is cold again
like last year
and the air smells
wet
it hits me
like too much hot or too much cold
in the shower
like the bad breath
of a beautiful woman
I shudder
shiver
turn away
but still it comes
and I take it in
harsh
like daggers
up my nose
and down my throat
icicles in my lungs
I cough
hold my breath
blow
it owns me no more
I breathe
in
and
back out.

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Untitled
Erin Jones

Untitled

Lance Crow

Caress me down
My face is sweat
A beaded frown
Taste salt's regret

Arms and palms
Clenched fists groping
Her beauty calms
Her words roping

With pleasure, pain
The two alone
Cannot abstain
Their hearts not stone

Two share one mind
One body too
Two hearts combined
In lover stew

For now love's grand
Just wait and see
Your lover's hand
Could change quickly

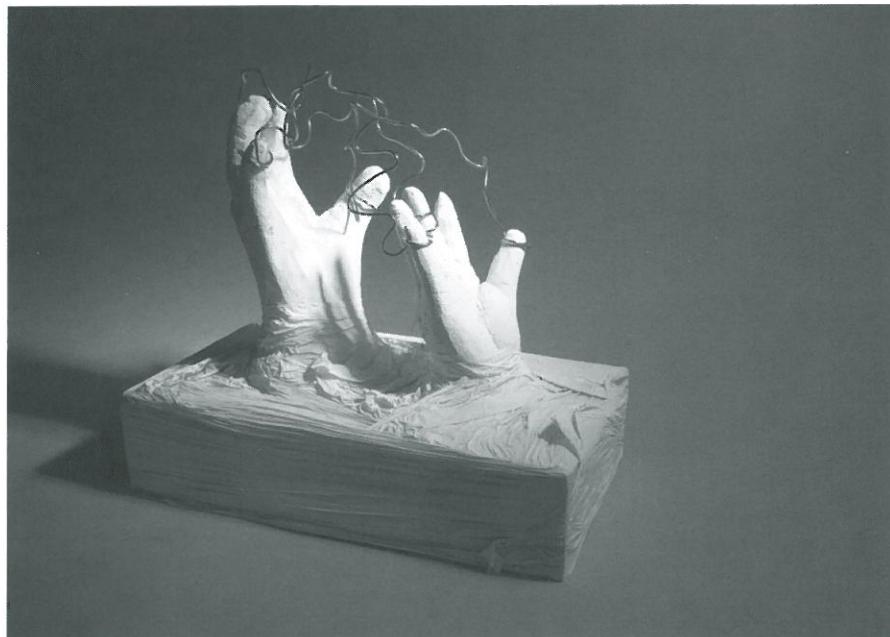
So embrace long
While time doth last
This maiden song
Shall soon be past

The Vision

Tim Hayes

Standing in the door of the hallway
Looking so estranged in paradise
The descending light
Restrained itself so slightly

For us it was quite a treat
Just to be able to meet
The little scene
That disturbs the silence.



Soul Connection
Brandon Hatfield

bLrOeVaEk

up

Kevin Scheer

A double standard you are
Your standards are bizarre
Blinding my eyes chaotic with your diction
Your grip lacks constriction
Take me from your presence you withhold
Tell me all things left untold
Speak of what you have misled me through
My emotions have been skewed from this point of view
Captivate among altercations though there were few
Left myself battered and bruised
Emotionally misused
Yet you seem to be amused
If only you knew what anguish this relationship brewed
It took one duel to change the mood
For myself, I'm sick of this feud

The Revenge of the Patwins

Mark R. Seely

Solano Park is a student-family housing complex built during the dawn of the 1960s on the campus of the University of California, Davis. It consists of a collection of two and three-story rectangular salmon-colored boxes with stucco walls scattered in a quilt pattern across a heavily treed park. We lived there for a couple years during the early nineties, entirely unaware that we were living on an Indian burial ground.

The discovery occurred when the university tried to install an automatic sprinkler system and began unearthing bodies. The bodies, it was eventually decided, were the remains of Patwin Indians, most of whom died in a small pox epidemic that swept through the area in the mid eighteen hundreds, compliments of the local Christian missionaries. The Patwins were never a tribe in the Hollywood sense of the word. They were just a bunch of folks who lived and fished along the muddy creek that now forms the northwest border of Solano Park. The word *Patwin* simply means *people*. Apparently when the first whites came into the region someone asked the Indians what they were called and they responded “people” and became an official tribe from that point on.

The burial ground was a real problem for university grounds keeping. The problem, of course, is what do you do with all the bodies lying right where you want to lay PVC pipe? The anthropology department wanted to excavate and use the site as an outdoor classroom. The department of Native American studies screamed that that would be sacrilegious. Eventually political correctness won out and one of the last surviving members of the Patwin tribe, a woman living somewhere in Pennsylvania, if I remember right, gave her consent to have the bodies relocated.

All this happened the summer we moved out.

While we lived there the ducks were the biggest problem. There were lots of them. But the problem wasn’t their numbers so much as their mating habits and the fact that Solano Park was home to dozens of very impressionable young children. Each spring the ducks would mate—anywhere and everywhere. What bothered the local parents, however, wasn’t the sheer exposure to the carnal act, but the fact that duck mating rituals look exactly like violent biker gang rape episodes: two or three males stalk and jump a female, and as the female attempts to escape, the male who is presently mounting her bites viciously at the back of her neck, sometime pinning her head to the ground at awkward and painful-looking angles. I witnessed a particularly brutal three-male copulation occur outside the building on campus that housed the woman studies department. Just on the other side of the wall, I imagined, was a classroom full of militant lesbian man-haters. And I wondered what they would make of the scene.

But the rough duck sex was nothing compared to the carnage that happened after the little ducklings hatched. It started out the same every year: mother ducks would walk around the park with seven or eight little babies all in a row behind them. And the little children would run out of their apartments and squeal and say “Look mommy, baby ducks!” and the mommies and daddies would take out their camcorders and cameras to take pictures of their cute little children smiling and pointing and laughing at the baby ducks. But then the sky would darken. And big black crows would swoop in from hell and line up on the eves of the buildings. The crows took turns pouncing down and snatching the last duckling in a line while the children screamed and the parents tried to

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shoo them away. What was worse was that the crows appeared to do it just for sport. They never ate the ducklings. They just carried them to the rooftops, shook them back and forth until their necks snapped, dropped them down on the sidewalk, and then swooped down to get some more. Overprotective mothers tried to hide their children from the spectacle—some even chased the crows off with brooms, but to no avail. The entire park watched in horror as rows of eight ducklings were whittled down to six, and then three, and finally one or two. And even then the crows would shadow the remaining duckling—too afraid to confront the larger mother duck directly, but hoping for that one moment of inattention, that one misstep when the duckling strayed just out of mom's reach.

Years later I had a dream that the crows were the spirits of the dead Patwins and the ducklings were little fluffy pox-infested missionaries.

Saturday

Nicholas T. Schafer

I am supposed to confess.
But to what? What shall I confess to,

Shall I say that when I was ten
I ran away. Or that the car accident
was not caused by a stray deer, but my
straying mind.

Saturdays are good days to confess,
they are lazy, as unmotivated as an
old dog, who has long forgotten his
tricks.

Shall I cry and beat my breast
as I tell of the time that I pushed
Mitch down the stairs
out of frustration and revenge.

Saturdays are as good for confessing
as Sundays are for forgiving.

Shall I confess that I secretly
tried to forget my love. For my family.
For my God. For that girl.
For myself.

But Saturday will not let me forget,
it holds me and forces me to confess,
to relive the pain and the horror
of my weakness.

I hate Saturday.

Poet Training

Mark R. Seely

Poems about fireflies are too easy –
miniature green comets like kings
riding the wake of cicada heralds
into airless July evenings –
and love is an anchor in quicksand.

Perhaps a dead raccoon holds some challenge,
crimson intestines draped across the asphalt –
a midsummer bouquet offered by a roadside vender

Plague
(loose imitation of Allen Ginsburg's "Howl")

Melissa Genova

I have known people who are content with their lonely world, quirky and
freeloving, but
 are dangerous because they know of nothing else
 who sit with coffee for hours staring at the cream swirling in coffee and touching
 the rim of their cups like it's the body of a man or a woman, not realizing
 how cold the outside world is,
 who tap their feet on street corner humming songs with their lips tight and
 pursed
 eyes, not realizing someone just handed them a five in their "I Love NY"
 mug,
 who close their doors to the hotel and stack the mini bar rums up in a pyramid,
 praying that they won't tumble and crack before they get a chance to let
 the
 warm, sticky liquid burn their tonsils,
 who use their chords to praise and hollar, their gray and black suits noticeable
 from
 a mile away (as if the "Hallelujah's" don't give it away) and their
 audiences
 avoid them and their blue papers printed with crosses, but they go on,
 who paint themselves in watercolors and oils even though there are canvasses
 around, not realizing that they are simply naked and covered in colored
 fluid, and try to put a price tag on themselves, which could never nearly
 be
 enough,
 who lick their laptops with no fear of electrical wires, just maybe a virus
 interrupting their play with webcams, and windows, and weirdos, and
 wizards for roleplay,
 who have tapped into that alternate universe sci-fi writers have been trying to
 discover since the invention of dimensions by people
 who can see colors and sound waves tearing at other people's bodies while they
 strut and talk on cell phones, aware of technology and spirituality, yet
 lack
 common sense when it comes to living,
 who kneel in a room praying to a shrine of needles and *Cosmopolitan* magazines
 and cosmopolitan drinks, searching for a place where heroine hits faster

and the alcohol tastes sweeter, because they feel they're a plague to humanity,
who watch as their cigarette burns into ash, eventually blistering their painted lips
as they pull down their skirts that are shorter than a pop song.
There's an empty room with a blank book
where we write our own story
and one candle to write by.
There's an empty bedroom with a mirror
that won't distort what we see and
a mattress where there should be a straightjacket.
Then the candle goes out.
I am there, insomnia.
I am there, vicadin.
I am there, plague.



Tin-man
James Cochran

Morning Glory

Mark R. Seely

The sun draws you upward
seeking light around the corners of my shadow.
Gently coiling tendrils have entangled my
mind – the thought of you,
soft petals wind blown against my age-weathered bole.

A scent that is clay and earth and sunrise,
a dew-soaked smile
fresh and new as dawn,
young as dawn is young each morning
and has been so since the very beginning of
time – an ancient naivete carefully practiced,
rehearsed for eons
and almost mastered but for that very first glimpse,
the first appearance in the first scene of the first act
as purple daybreak's first cautious footfall treads softly upon the stage,
a telltale glint of eternity slips through the mask.

I am unguarded and unarmed and unprepared
as you caress old wounds
and find sturdy foothold in the uneven places of my soul.

Transience is your abiding essence,
your laughing day-long dance.

And I become intoxicated at the thought of you.

Lost Child

Melissa Alba

this little girl
she sits on her bed
staring at the glitter nail polish
-cyanide sparkles black tar lacquer on her squared nails,
naked toes her mother used to pluck so lovingly
like pizzicato strings on a violin,
this little piggy in C-minor.

eventually, all the other little piggies cried *wee wee wee*
all the way home...
all the little girls she knew in school
found their way home,
found their way to love,
found their way to cope;
yet, this little girl just cried *wee*.

she picks pilled wool off the arm of her sweater,
tugging at the loose purple strings at the wrists
where the scars remain;
she doesn't know why she's torn and broken
and not even all the king's men,
not even all of her friends can put her back together again...
she keeps unraveling her stupid purple sweater
instead of mending her soul.

she is no little Miss Muffet, for she doesn't scream
in the face of a spider because she's tougher than that
-a feminist who believes in the advancement of all women;
yet, she deconstructs herself piece by piece...
this Mary never had a little lamb or any food that wasn't vegan;
if she can spare their flesh, she can spare her own.

this little girl and her ex-flame.
this little Jill and her Jack:
all he ever did was push her down the hill,
never once tumbling after...

if you didn't know her like i do,
you would think that she's just a quiet little girl
who sits on her bed, paints her toe nails,
and fixes her sweater.

but her pain moves...
slower than you or i.
slower than she could ever show you.
slower than life in nursery rhyme.

Like a Bad Painting

Melissa Genova

He gazed at me like a bad painting
with brilliant ideas,
decked out in blue jeans, bubbles, bedbugs,
breast, and blank glances.
He glued his hands to my waist,
waiting, watching for my next piece
played on an out-of-tune piano,
me plunking Puccini with a placid personality
forming in my fingers and fake nails
flaking away like finger paints on concrete
cursed by sunlight and coarse Chicago winds that
whistle through a window decorated with
all-American apple pie.
My skin peeled away slowly,
my spine slinking back and
allowing myself to slouch when he stepped near me.
Tap, Tap, Tap.
My feet became impatient little girls
in pink tu-tus and toe shoes.
And he said he believed in me like a Galileo theory,
And like a soft yellow towel when the tide comes.
He was touching me like time before
it slithered through his fingers,
or like a painting about to fall off a wall.

Inventory

Annie Domasica

one moment
one tear
one silence
one scent
one picture remembered
one night I won't forget
one pair of sweatpants
one shirt with holes
one bed of memories
one withered rose
one second
one word
one question
one sigh
one pillowcase I won't wash
one towel I can't dry
one card from Christmas
one line of a song
one calendar from last year
one thing was wrong
one comment
one kiss
one earlobe
one tongue
one pair of diamonds
one song sung
one fairytale written
one letter to send
one chapter too short
one unhappy end



Untitled

James Cochran

Cabin Fever

Mark R. Seely

1

Against the window pane
like so many white horses
crashing out of the dust
and into the water at the base of a steep hillside,

a suicide run of March snowflakes.

2

March,
and the snow finally comes
unapologetically late—
a businessman delayed by a board meeting.

Icy dust devils form
and disintegrate outside the window,
spinning cylindrical brooms
sweep the baleens of beached white whales.

3

In the neighbor's garden
small icicles cling like ethereal spiders
to the wooden blade of a decorative windmill
while I contemplate the difference between stillness
and immobility

Absolution

Andrea Ward

Why do the fires of Hades fall upon me?
The mountains shake through our black tirade
Of direst cruelty we scream ourselves empty
The deep hole we dig our emotions have made

For every curse that flies from our lips
An angel of love falls dead at the sound
Feelings, memories, a harsh word rips
Tears out the life so easily found

When the cold dust has settled
When the rage has run thin
Rain pours into a kettle
To be boiled within

Perhaps we have stumbled on the road to bliss
Maybe our efforts haven't amounted to much
But emptiness, sorrow, have told my mind this:
Sometimes, forever is only a crutch

The long road ahead looks bleak and barren
He calls from the twisted wreckage behind
Nothing can turn me away, and I daren't
I fear that comfort in his voice I would find

Alone in the void
I hear a new voice
I want to avoid
I don't have a choice

My heart cries for him
A new star in the dark
A warm, loving hymn
A clean new start

A Palm Reader's Guess

Jen Zak

Twenty dollars
I paid at a fortune telling booth
next to the McDonald's
on the boardwalk of Virginia Beach.

Twenty dollars
for a woman in a turban
to tell me when I'll die,
have children, and get married.

Twenty dollars
for a prediction that changed my life,
channeled my future decisions
and brought me where I am today.

Twenty dollars
and now look at where I am
I sacrificed my dream
because she said it wouldn't come true.

Twenty dollars
and all I found out
was that I would have two children
and I can sometimes be quick tempered.

Upon Making the Same Mistake More Than Twice

Melissa Genova

(It got hot in here all of a sudden)
I play the part that everything's
cool, and I'm alright, and you
won't make me cry when I'm
alone tonight, and no I'm not a bit jealous.
I'll play that part until a
sound so loud reverberates
in my ears making it
impossible to think.
I'll play the part of classy when I
really want to splash a
glass of cherry coke all
over your polo shirt,
and storm off to cheers
like the hot rock star I think I am.
I've been this "girl" so many times
It's just easier to walk
Away, knowing either you'll call
and everything will sorta be ok,
or I'll never hear from you again
except awkward silences and
quick knowing glances,
maybe a "hi," maybe an
empty vow to call sometime.
I'll play the part of
Perfectly stoic, perfectly cute,
Perfect smile.
Perfect for you, I'm non-confrontational. Perfect
for me that I can handle this.
(All of a sudden, it's gotten awfully cold in here)

Thief!

Kenny Shumard

Thief!
You stole my attention.
I was guarding it
To parcel out a bit at a time
To ration it.
And along you came
And your careless-carefree soul
Snuck in and ripped it from me, all at once.
I doubt you even realize you've done it.
Is it possible that in the exchange
I captured a bit of yours, too?

Nicholas T. Schafer

The Loss of the Shuttle Colombia

It was a great show,
Kind of like the air show,
my dad took me,
when I was 12.

Bright streaks across the sky,
A punishing flash of light.
But this time it wasn't so exciting.

I woke up late, 10:45.
Didn't have a clue.
John told me, his brother called.

CNN was a mess,
New reports every 2 minutes.

We sat,
We watched,
I remembered.

I saw the last one
In '86.
Challenger.

Memories of Challenger

The whole school was there, K-5.
I remember the countdown,
10
We didn't know what was going on,
9
I was talking to Mitch,
8
The principal told us this was very important
7
A teacher was going into space
6
I like space
5
Luke Skywalker lived there,
4
Wondered if the teacher would get to meet him,
3
Thought I wanted to be an astronaut,
2
Saw a movie about space camp once,
1
It would be cool to live in space,

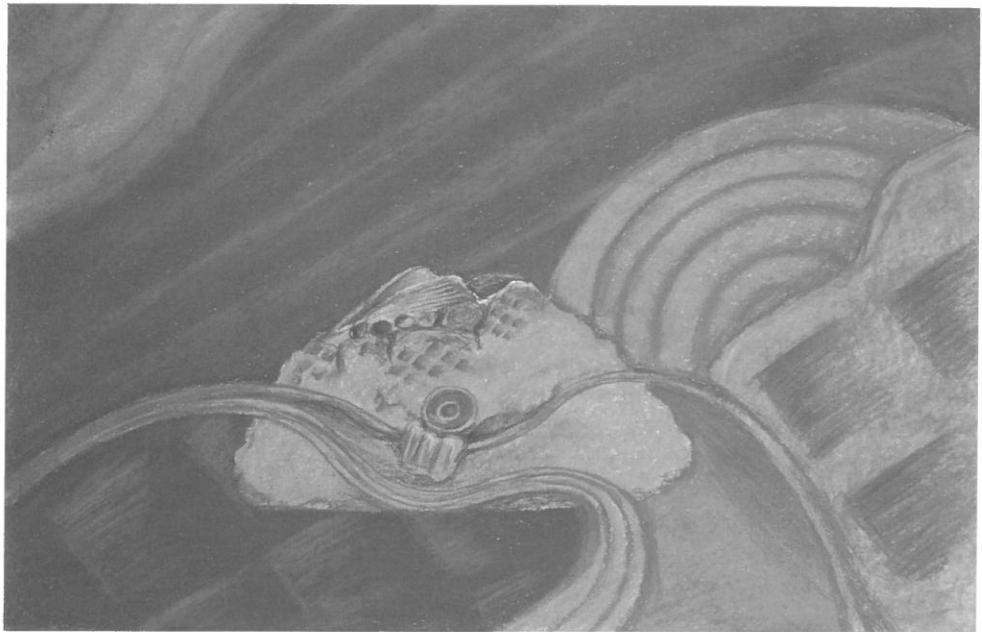
LIFTOFF

Up, up and away....BOOM
Fire consumed the shuttle
I thought it was cool—
things blew up on TV
all the time.
We just didn't understand.

Thespian

Scout Durwood

O, acting is not magic; it is art.
Like dream to the creative soul, or alcohol
to college boys. Acting is like air.
One does not stop at curtain calls: to bow
is not to end, for that's where I'm alive—
on stage. With rage and wrath, and ecstasy.
O, acting is like air. A myriad
of words to trip and tumble, flit and fall
from corners of my mouth to corner of
your humble ear. That's where I live: on stage,
beneath a glass that magnifies and lies.
War is not blood and gore on stage,
but death so proud and noble. Grand soliloquies
and bended knees, and tragic loss and love.
O, I can fly on stage. These words are not
mine own, and yet somehow they find their way
to places deep within my "magic if"
and they are mine: my fairy jewels from page
to stage to rage to praise, to swallow whole
like Sunday on the beach with ebbing tides
that sink and rise like actors' will to live.
For we are not a happy bunch. Oh no,
We are much more. We are elation and
despair, melancholy
madness like a bear in winter and a
butterfly at dawn. It is my home, where
I belong, for every other place I
go I am somehow estranged.



Untitled

Michelle Klotsbach

Untitled

Kenny Shumard

Everyone's gone and I'm alone again.
It's always worst right after they leave
When the memories are still fresh
And the numbness hasn't set in yet.

I'm left wondering if the memories are real
If the good times and close friends I had
Were more than just conjurations of a lonely soul
There's plenty of time to ponder
Now that I'm alone again.



Frozen Waterfall
Jean Monfort

Depictions of Her Heart

Bridget Newman

A red, pulsating, fragile thing
So completely vulnerable
To them
To Men
Yearning for understanding
It does not find understanding
In them
In Men
It is really quite a contradiction of itself
It is weak in the hands
Of them
Of Men
Pain flows through her veins
But she opens her heart everyday
For them
For Men
Because she thinks there is something only a man can do to her
He makes her heart fly above the clouds
And so she gives it to them
Leaving her warmth in them
Only thinking of them
And only living for them
Never for herself.

The Trouble With Rain

Nicholas T. Schafer

Jealousy is
as predictable as the rain,
Never far away,
Starting as a trickle,
Then without warning
Spewning out
in
Gafopppping torrents.



Patented Yo-Yo Holder

James Cochran

The Waltz

Scout Durwood

My foot is twelve inches long—
Twelve inches in a foot.
(Mathematicians would revel in it)
From heel to toe:
one two three four five four three two one. two one.
So every time I step I have moved twelve inches.
Three feet between my steps.
Twelve inches.
Two feet.
Three feet right heel to left toe.
Like do re mi fa so la ti do.
Do ti la so fa me re do.
Twenty four million miles to the world.
A quarter of a second to take a step.
(Even less to make it count)
One hundred and twenty billion feet.
(Ten times as many toes)
Over three
Times point two five.
(Mr. Washington with ridges)
Make love and war.
Million of steps.
Billions and trillions of steps to change the world.
Twelve inches heel to toe.
Like the first note of a symphony...
The first digit in pi...
Twelve inches head to toe.

The Ride

Rebecca Griffin

Things go by,
The harder we try - the faster they go.
We continue on this rough ride called life.

The roads are bumpy and cause some pain.
There is no pavement, only gravel remains.
Our decisions and actions provide the bumps.

Our thoughts are the car in which we travel.
Mine, a junker in need of much work,
With too many miles, too little maintenance.

The ride is rough,
The road is bumpy.
We wonder if it will ever end.
Yet somehow we all live on,
Through this difficult ride.

The Etiquette of a Lady

Rebecca Scherer

Look at them over there.
Huddling in a hushed circle,
stories told through thin lips
behind expensive hands,
laughing eyes flashing
with morbid curiosity
petty laughter blocking
the entrance of a wandering stranger.
Gossip.

In pairs—never alone, of course—they break away from the safety of their circular fortress and head to class. I follow; I listen: I gain insight to the fairer sex.

Test day: they discuss their chances of acing.
With sinister smiles and plan in their hearts,
they sit in the front row.
A flash of leg as one hikes her skirt up,
stretching its long bareness under the desk;
a peek of skin as the other pulls her blouse down,
leaning forward, her eagerness a mockery.
Manipulation.

They leave just as they entered. One parts from the other, a smile on her face, as she tails the professor. I follow; I listen; I gain insight to the fairer sex.

In his office: they discuss her failing grade.
going through the motions, she recites
the traditional excuses,
pseudo-panic rising in her voice:
she is planning her attack carefully.
Professor shakes his head; girl lowers hers.
Pitiful sobbing breaks the heavy silence
as her black mascara forms rivers down her face.
Comforting her into silence, Professor handles his red pen
as a knight would his broadsword.
Pity.

Ah... the etiquette of a lady...

Stephen

Scout Durwood

A breathless stream of consciousness

T-H

“th”

The tongue comes in contact with the teeth like a snake.

My lover bruised my nipples with his teeth.

Terrific (roll the “r”)

I feel my glasses and my jeans.

Stan’s hat. I could be his lover.

Vertigo – roll the “r”.

Can they see my thoughts?

It is gone.

Caffeine, taurine, guanine, cytosine.

Darwin and Aristotle.

It is gone.

I have ebed.

My pills.

Velvet Underground – my heroine.

I am a virgin. (Do not roll the “r”)

I want more drugs to kiss and corrupt me.

This is terrible poetry.

A yellow submarine.

To act is to do.

Pick up your internal tempo.

Choose between his thoughts and mine.

It is 8:00; where am I?

I have to walk to the beach. The letter “O” is dirty and erotic.

O, trespass brightly urged. Give me my sin again.

The lips are pursed with an “m.”

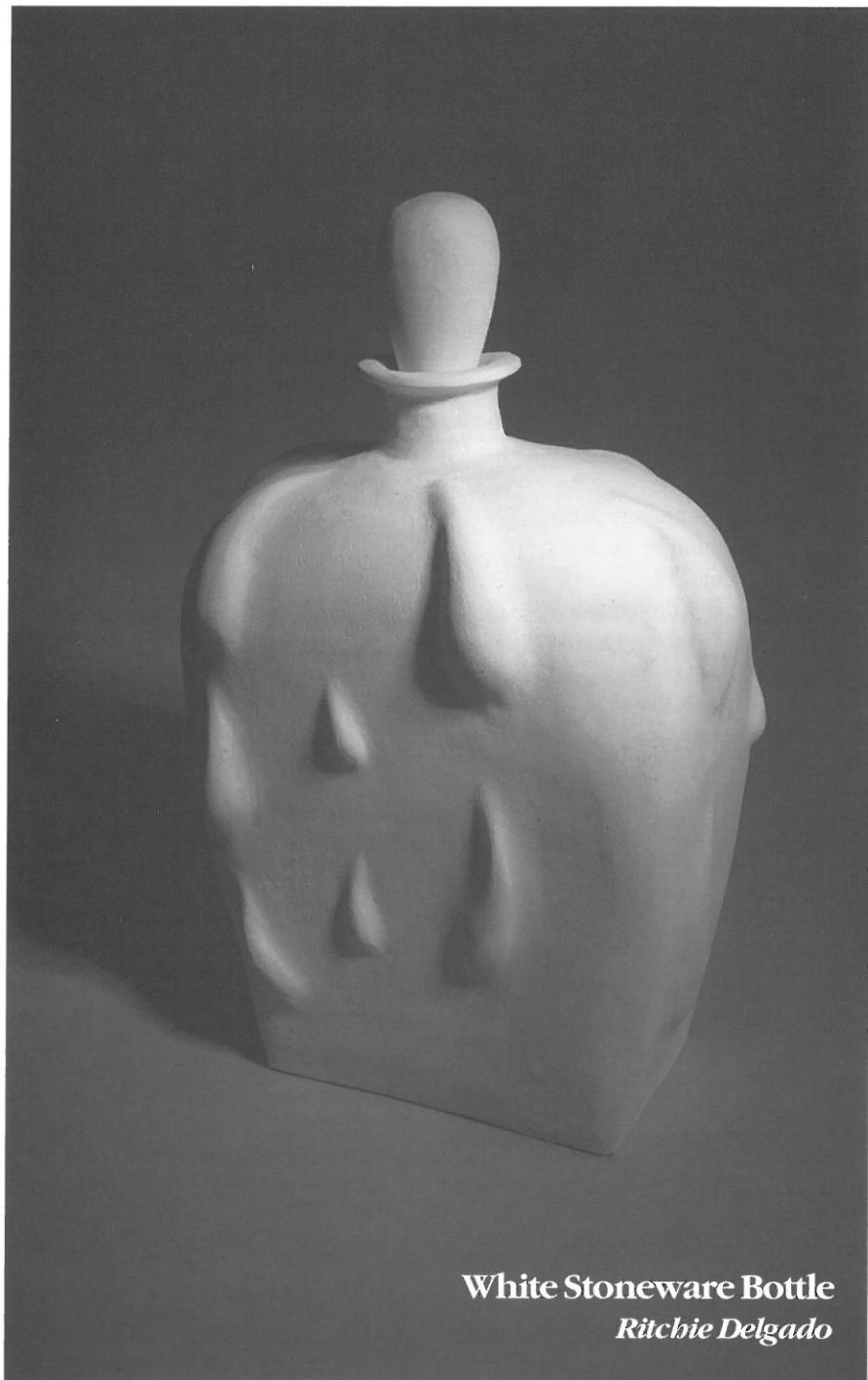
Too many boxes to break out of.

O, trespass brightly urged.

Close your eyes and see.

Acting is not magic, it is art.

Measure



White Stoneware Bottle
Ritchie Delgado

Rosie's Advice

Rebecca Scherer

“We can do it!” she says.
Her callused hands and muscular arms are
a mutiny to her sex
and contradictory to her shiny brown curl
and perfectly sculpted brows.
Still, “We can do it!” she says.
Well, I’m sure we can, but...
Why should I want to?
Why do I need to be an
Independent Woman?
What’s so wrong with being
Old Fashioned?
So I want to cook –
So I want to clean –
I want to wear my housedress
and my high heels
and smile at the vacuum cleaner
as we glide over the carpet.
I want to have dinner
on the table at 6
and talk to myself at breakfast
as my husband grunts in response behind the paper.

Does this make me a bad person?
We’re all entitled to our opinions
and our own choices in life.
Why do I feel less
in the presence of more liberated women?
They are no better than me,
their choices no better than mine.

Her stern expression threatens me
and raises a pang of guilt
as I call down the hall
for a Big Strong Man
to open the pickle jar
instead of trying a little harder myself,
for fear of breaking a nail.

My Father's Pockets

Nicholas T. Schafer

My Father's Pockets

The old plaid hat,
Crumpled and folded,
A whiskey flask,
Car keys, and
Half used matchbooks,

My Father's Pockets

Cluny car keys
an old pocket knife
twisted bits of wire
a tiny screwdriver
a chipped arrowhead
crumpled lottery tickets
a lego.

My Confessor

Slacktoothed smile
Squinted eyes
Peaking crown,
through tufts
of retreating hair,
stubby legs
carry on
from place to place,
funny man.

No Title
(modeled after the Emily Dickinson poem
“I like to see it lap the Miles”)

Rebecca Scherer

It comes to me when I’m sad,
keeps me company when I’m lonely
and in need of comfort
or words of wisdom;

Freely raising itself into the air,
it wafts around and drifts in the current,
weaving between my ears and my soul;
and then the flourish comes,

wrenching or lifting my heart,
crying or laughing in time,
all the while opening my soul
and bearing wide,
forcing my inhibitions into obsolescence;

Then hesitating in the air
like the scent of apple pie,
it ends – quietly and alone –
until the rhythm spins me again.

Make Believe

Adam Schoff

Zeno proved that the phone will ring
and we'll never pick it up
The antelope lives in the woods
and he'll never lose the hunt
He show'd us things that we'd never know
and we could not comprehend
What magic thoughts we would have seen
if we crawled up in his head

Spread your wings said the little man
to the girl who made believe
She lives down on Market Street
between the willow trees
He tells stories of days he spent
dreaming little things
Like planting trees and raising geese
and his circus full of fleas

The land of make believe lies
between your ears I know
Where antelopes answer phones
and the magic tree tops grow
I know you've never been there
and I know you want to go
Above the flea circus
where the geese fly in a row

Imitation of Charles Simic's "Charles Simic"

Melissa Genova

Melissa Genova is coffee.
She is addicting and hot.

Is she decaf or caffeinated?
She is laced with Kahlua.
She is sugar sweetened.

How do you take coffee in?
Drinking, slurping, and lapping are all ways.

What does she taste like?
She's got a flavor all her own.

What is added to the coffee?
A chocolate spoon to mix it up.

How do she hit the tongue?
She's strong, yes,
but easy to ingest.

Who is drinking the coffee?
An innocent, a whore with blue eyes,
a homeless man in an X-files hat.

Will she end up in a lap or an old pot?
She'll end up in the mouth of a curly haired poet and a stain in his book.

Friday

Nicholas T. Schafer

I have surrounded myself,
with excellence. Built up
a vision of open mindedness.
and watched that vision
fall, into the dust.

Education is not synonymous
with wisdom. The educated are not
flawless, sometimes their words
are the most flawed.

What is it then to be educated?

Is an education nothing more than a mere re-arranging of prejudices?

Trading in prejudices
of race and religion for new
intolerances.

Fear

Susan Huss

Fear is the fantasy island you can't reach
Because you won't get on the plane.

Fear is the movie you won't be in
Because you can't face the audition.

Fear is the grandmother you won't visit
Because you don't know how long she'll survive.

Fear is the book you won't write
Because you think no one will read it.

Fear is the one who can't love you back
Because he doesn't know you love him.

Epiphany of an Innocent

Rebecca Scherer

Shreds of love letters,
withered roses,
and tear-stained pillows
are all that remind me
of you.

You wrote me poems
declaring your undying love,
and sent me flowers
just to make sure
I believed you.

Now the torn bits
of those oppressive letters
lie scattered
throughout my bedroom.
The roses sit in
an almost empty vase,
wilting and dying
like my respect
for you.

The only signs of warmth
are the hot tears
still fresh on my pretty pillow case;
the only sign of life:
my genuine smile.

34 Golfview Rd.

Jen Zak

The tires of my explorer crunch
over the freshly fallen snow
as I leave the place
that I sometimes call home.

My rearview mirror shows
my solace closer than it really appears,
but I know in my heart
that I'm going farther and farther away.

The driveway looks lonely now
embracing the tracks left by my tires
an imprint that will be gone, like me,
in the morning.

A small figure in a hooded jacket
is left alone there now, stamping his feet
and waving as I pull away
onto a busier street.

My car rumbles and creaks telling me
that it too is just as sad as I am.

It leaks its inky tears
onto the street
and I silently cry into my mittens,
both attempting to appear composed.

My car does not like the streets it travels today.
It slips and slides along,
moaning and squeaking
as we go on our way.

Our only comfort
is my stereo playing
that he installed
in the driveway last summer.

It sings sweetly to us
as we say goodbye
and attempts to soothe
our lonely souls.

...is like...

Nicholas T. Schafer

Jealousy is like rain, sporadic and ever changing.

Memory is like baseball, hard and useful, until someone knocks the stuffing out of it.
or...age knocks it out of the park.

Boredom is like cut grass, severed from the world and waiting...

Pride is a spade, digging and digging—in vain—becoming more and more dull with time.

Contempt is like acid, spinning and churning in your stomach—teasing ulcers and eating away at
your insides.

Hypocrisy is like a boomerang, throw it hard enough and it will come back to hit you.

Loneliness is like a glass cell, you can see out, but no one can get in.

Loneliness is like a fire extinguisher, hanging on a wall, suffering from disuse, waiting to save the day.

Sincerity is like fur-lined gloves on a February day.

Insecurity is like a cold blanket, that is too short and never covers your feet.

Longing is like sandstone in a quarry, waiting for the mason's hammer.

Guilt is like a ball of undigested cheese, sitting in the pit of your stomach—fermenting.

Confession is like an old sneaker, not something that you would wear in public, but feels so good?

Disgust is like a red balloon, swelling, stretching, until—POP—the end.

Humor is like a white feather pillow.

Envy is like a half-empty bourbon glass, you can't stop—yet you always want more.

Fear is like running down a country road; no matter how far you run, there is always more road.

Pain is like a close-talker,

Sometimes you can see it coming,

sometimes you can't,

Sometimes it blindsides you,

sometimes you can run,

Sometimes it catches you,

sometimes it won't let you go,

But you can never, ever escape.

where is my dream?

Natalie Lapacek

excitement is so far away
it has escaped my vision.

where is my dream?

I had it in my hand
not so long ago,
it was light and soft
like a feather
but somehow,
it got away
and lost itself,
too weak to
overcome
the world's harsh winds.

I long to have my dream
that was a voice
pushing, urging me

to take the chance,
to keep my visions,
to never let them go.

but I let it go.

When He Smiles

Bridget Newman

When he smiles
The world lights up
and me, especially,
I see stars
'Cause of those lips
Like slices of a
Salmon sky
A tangerine treat for me every night
And every day that I want some of that
And that is every day
That I want him
When he smiles
My heart pounds fast
And I know what he's thinking
'Cause I'm contemplating, too,
Where we're going to do what we want to do
Yeah the maps of our brains
Are laid out the same
We are cartographers
In well-known lands
Yeah we've got each other figured out
When he smiles
He makes it easy
To fall in love with his face
It's the kind you don't get
Tired of
Sick of
Bored of
Like a puppy that doesn't grow up
And he knows it
And he uses it
To tease me
And though you might think that's not a good thing
I assure you that it is
When he smiles
It's the sweetest thing I know
It's my favorite thing to show off to my friends
I love to make him laugh
So I can see those lips part
And that's when I know most
We're meant to be
Especially
When he smiles

Untitled

Kenny Shumard

Out of nowhere
Childhood memory
Lost and gone for years
5th grade
Lunchroom – working
Lisa Felty
“¡Ay Carumba!”
I liked her earrings.
I thought she was pretty.
I was shy.
She walked away.
Lisa Felty.

The Plague

Calvin Metts

Everything is on tilt, like homes freshly built lacking foundation
The Plague is in full effect and it's killing my Black nation
Blacks must be content with our futures being jagged
We're so used to being high that we're in a continuous state of jet lag
Maybe it's true
You rep what you sow
And if you sow in fertile soil your seed will grow
But how will that seed grow if the youth aspire to be on the corners yelling "Rocks and Blow?"
Niggas aint shit but where are our positive role models
The best we can hope for is a full time job at McDonald's
But I don't know Ronald so they got me working nine-hour shifts at Kmart
Overworked, underpaid and under appreciated
We live in a fucked up environment and to be completely honest I hate it
They say it's not right for us to hate where we come from
Well you spend a year where I live and we'll see how much you would enjoy coming home
The West-Side of Chicago, known to us as the Windy City
Where bums live on the streets begging for spare change but angered when people show them pity
I look at my surroundings knowing that things are real shitty
Now it's clear why Mayor Daily wants my kind out of his metropolis city
Drive through Chicago and let's see how much equality truly exist
Hookers getting pimped on Cicero
Fourteen-year-old girls shaking their ass on Fullerton thinking they're hot
But what's hot about teenage moms and crack heads and bums?
Mom's and Daddy coming home drunk not providing for flesh and blood created from their own
Now how are we supposed to understand the meaning of true love?
When we would rather allow our sons and daughters to grow up selling drugs then give up our deadly habit of doing drugs
And we wonder why they call us the lost generation
Because we're constantly killing ourselves when we should be investing time to make something better of ourselves
Lazier than a five-hundred pound elephant after a good nut
It's becoming way too easy for us to just give up
But pride keeps getting in my face
Checking me, putting me back in my place
Blacks are tired of dying but too afraid to live
They say the only way to end this cycle is to learn to give

Measure

Curse the Man *Jen Zak*

I

Sometimes e e
f l like I am f

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i n

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a

D t e m

i

O e s p

n

W t e
N a s p

e
s i

I always have to r to the

Occasion
But I find

M Y
S E
L

F

Falling
d APAR

T

e t

f

like i
FIFTY pounds l off my BACK
F l o a t i n g g away

Curse the **man** who created DEADLINES

Curse the **man**— Nowhere to f

a
l

l to—I need to sleep...zzz...

Untitled

Kenny Shumard

Is this shame, this black dark feeling inside?
This hole in my soul and my head and my heart
This feeling of loss and despair and emptiness
Is this regret?
Is this fear I'm not where I belong?
Where do I belong?
I don't know...
God help me
Guide me
Can I make it right?
No – I think now.
But is it because it's no longer possible
— Because I've waited too long—
or because I'm too afraid?
Ah, that's the question.

Measure
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